

FICTION • NONFICTION • ART • POETRY • PHOTOGRAPHY

THE AUBURN CIRCLE

SPRING 2014 • VOLUME 40, ISSUE 2



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Cover Photo: "Lit Path" by Michelle Roberts
Canon EOS Rebel T3

“There is no greater agony than
bearing an untold story inside you.”

- Maya Angelou



The Auburn Circle

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Letter from the Editor

Nearly two years ago, the summer before I became editor-in-chief of *The Auburn Circle*, my mom asked me if I knew what I was getting myself into. She was understandably concerned, as I had never done anything like it before. And it turns out that she had a right to be worried—that first semester, I had no idea what I was doing. I felt like I had been thrown headfirst into the deep end and expected to swim. But with the help of my staff and my graduate advisor, we somehow molded *The Auburn Circle* into a magazine that we could be proud of.

Both my staff and I have come a long way in the two years since that first magazine, and it's hard to accept that my tenure as editor-in-chief of this publication is coming to a close. From the first few terrifying months of not knowing what to do to these last few months as a confident and experienced editor, I have enjoyed every moment of my time at *The Auburn Circle*. Yes, it has been a long, hard road full of ups and downs, moments of fun and moments of sheer panic, triumphs and frustrations, but I wouldn't trade it for anything.

My goal since day one at *The Auburn Circle* has been to create a legacy, something that serves as a foundation for the magazine in the years to come. And I would like to think that I have achieved that. I know that when I look back at this magazine in twenty years, I will be as proud of it then as I am now. And it is with that great pride that I present to you the Spring 2014 issue of *The Auburn Circle* and take my leave as editor-in-chief of this outstanding publication.

Shelby Rice
Editor-in-Chief



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C'est l'hiver

I'm grating against you
like sugar
insoluble
at the bottom of a coffee cup
clenched hot between
my fingers,
like snowflakes
soaking into newsprint
so the ink slips
under my nails
a memory
of how you laughed before
and held a happier me
imprinted
with the uncertain etching
of a shaking hand
and shallow breathing
of winter
for you change with the seasons
and I am eternally searching for a spring
with you.

Your hard-edged glares
broken on my soft palms
like shards of light
cast by crystals cold on a window pane
waiting for a fog of hot breath
to warm
me
you
whispered embers once
flushed orange
now they land dark
and heavy on my eyelids
frozen nervous
to open into you
to try
again
again we've reached
the drowning point
of unspoken everything
filling our lungs
with ice chips
of a former
us.

Caroline Barr
poetry

(No one will believe me) If I Say this is not a Love Poem

Every time we meet, we are a different pair. Sometimes the equals sign does not mean balance—you press down the bread (whole grain, of course, full of questions, sprinkled with answers, difficult to digest) and you turn the knob—what will we get for toast? I press down and come up blushed a burnt dark brown. You, the slot next door, arrive barely warm.

I like your voice and love your hair (even though you hate it long). I push to see how long I can say it, and you prolong it. I see an augury in its length. My beard will be a token of universal friendship, of the love between us said famous Henry VIII.

How should I be me today? Who will fit to this new you? What about tomorrow and what about after? I press again and you om and Namaste, bend your long yogi's body, a taut guitar string calling to be strummed—there's music in the thing, but only in the playing.

Richard Tyler
poetry

Love Garland; Love, Multiplied

I. Love Garland

In black ink, cursive, faded
into memory by years of clutching—
four, exactly, since he left for war,
asked for her hand,
asked her father for permission
to write her letters,
passed her on the road
splitting firewood, and said,
“Will you let me, ma’am?”
Four, exactly, since he left for war,
and another half-year until he’s home—
six more months of smudging
his signature, of loving
her stoic soldier on paper
while he is in Belgium
under ten inches
of bullet-laced snow.

II. Love, multiplied

His father endured, left Belgium—
Shell-shocked, but survived—
married his girl,
baby-boomed two boys.
“Miracles,” his mother said,
even though the youngest
didn’t last two days
outside her womb.
The oldest missed Vietnam
“By the grace of God
and a day-off roll
of the birthday lottery”
and married to make “miracles”
of his own: two girls—
neither looked like Mama.
Daddy and daughters
look like his father,
the man above Love Garland.

Laura Raye May
poetry

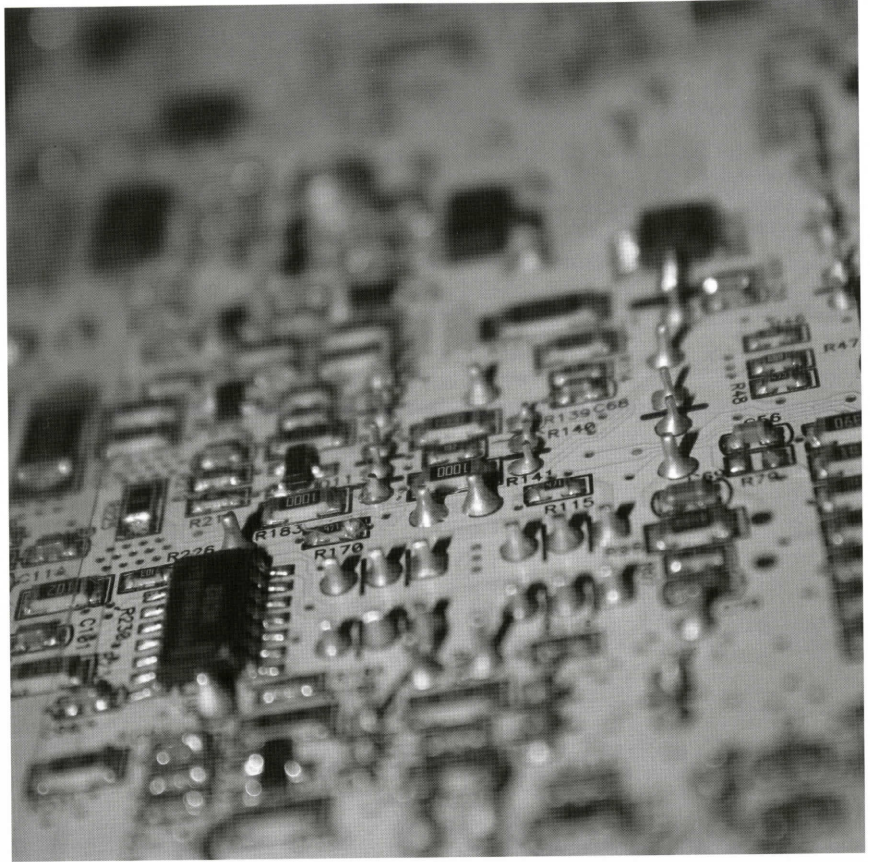


“Memory” by Heidi Hunter
Vivitar, 100 ISO Black and White Film

①



②



③



1. "Light in a Window" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

2. "Small City" by Alex Welsh
Canon T2i

3. "Elevation" by Derek Herscovici
Olympus FE210, X775



Aftermath of the Tornado

During the day we sat sticky on the outside wicker,
anxious nerves trembling and tumbling over pictures
and words bringing news of what has happened,
we were spared unlike so many others.
We stare at the blinking red bar in the corner of our screens,
and we must wait
to hear the power lines hum again.

At night we sat in a dull, hot darkness,
our minds probing candlelight for something to do
or something to even say to soften the silence,
our eyelids sank without choice
for there was nothing else to do,
and we must wait
for morning's light to wake us.

And then there are the dreams,
fear of choking winds that missed us the first time
but maybe not a second,
swirling shards of my home and no one can hear the screams
for they can't escape my throat,
always hanging thick in the darkness.
And we must wait.
Wait.
Wait.
We wait.

Caroline Barr
poetry

1. "The Glory Days" by Renae Nicole Rodriguez
Vivitar V3800N, Ilford HP5 Plus 400 Film

2. "Full House" by Renae Nicole Rodriguez
Vivitar V3800N, Ilford HP5 Plus 400 film

Audubon's *American Crow*

I, apostle, sit where the base of a black walnut tree
would be if it extended off the canvas and burrowed

into the museum floor, roots spider-veining
out under the slick planks curator heels click on.

You, American Crow, neither understand me
nor love—our stares moan an almost-convergence,
a schizophrenic's kiss.

In the small space of our non-collision
there is a need as sick and orbital as the black
walnuts bruising on the branch you occupy.

I could stand and stroke your glass feathers,
press my lips to the hooked stalactites of your claws,
but your eyes would still refuse to be anything

other than not mine. Ovals of amber costume
jewelry in a showcase marked *SOLD*.

Rebekah Rielle
poetry



"Time Inside" by Caitlin Piery
Nikon D80



"Disuse" by Alex Welsh
Canon T2i



Roads

I could never quite
remember the names of
the roads we have been on,
just the feeling of tight clothed toes
balancing clutch and pedal.
Watching the fresh steam rise
and foreign trees stretch over us,
we soundlessly slip down
the green and gravel veins
running through the country.

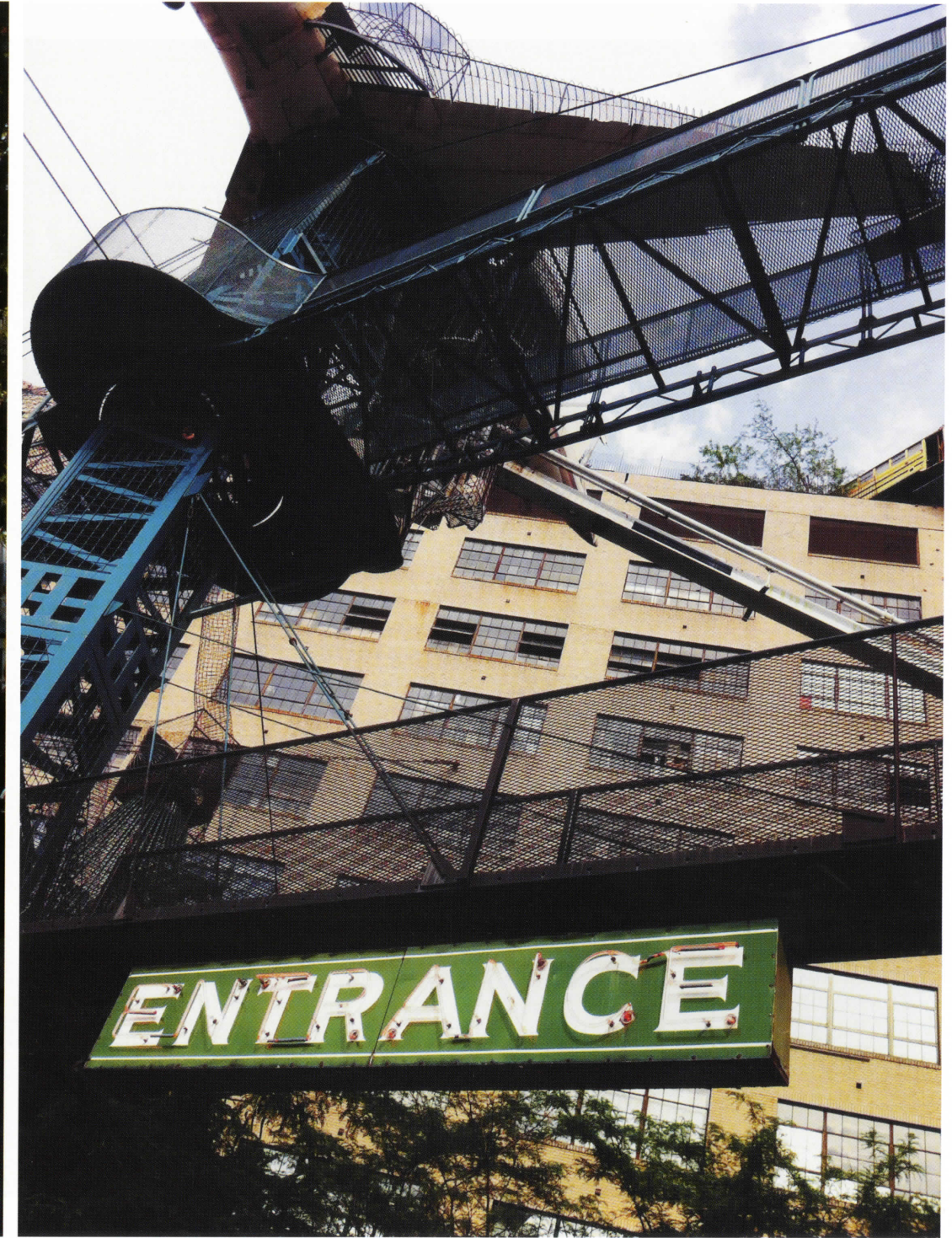
I could never remember
the names of those roads,
just rain licking the windows
as my heavy eyes pierced pavement.
Veering off of deliberate paths,
we either rode into day or
skimmed the surface of it.
Just us breaking the horizon
with half-lit dreams of
some restless street somewhere.

I could never remember
the names of all of those roads,
just tired hands thumbing dials
searching the fuzz and
listening to the hums.
We let out waning breaths
under the waxing night as
white knuckles knit between
every other finger and
I have wandering bones as
we pressed forward on to
every road we've ever been on.

Ashley Goerke
poetry



"Chestnut Smoke" by Michelle Roberts
Canon EOS Rebel T3



"Entrance" by Caitlin Piery
iPhone 5s



"Induced Chaos" by Kayla Lamb
Oil Paint

The Garden of Earthly Delights

Bosche knows how
they keep moving,
those shadows,
even through the night
unseen,
pressing buttons
to cross red-lit streets,
bodies moving
left and more left
but never looking back
as their minds
assume right

Right towards
fish heads that gloat,
naked figures that
intertwine and
suck on luscious fruits
that will soon fade
from strawberries to
limitless acrylic apples
and lusting on
others who kneel
to the gods of desire
as well

Look up one day,
bats fluttering away
to the next scene
and realize that you
won't see sun
nor plants such as these—
splintering vines,
obscure shades of green,
all
without teeth,
without claws,
without sins, without laws.

Torture is incumbent—
always moving
even when still.

Alicia Renee Berdeguez
poetry



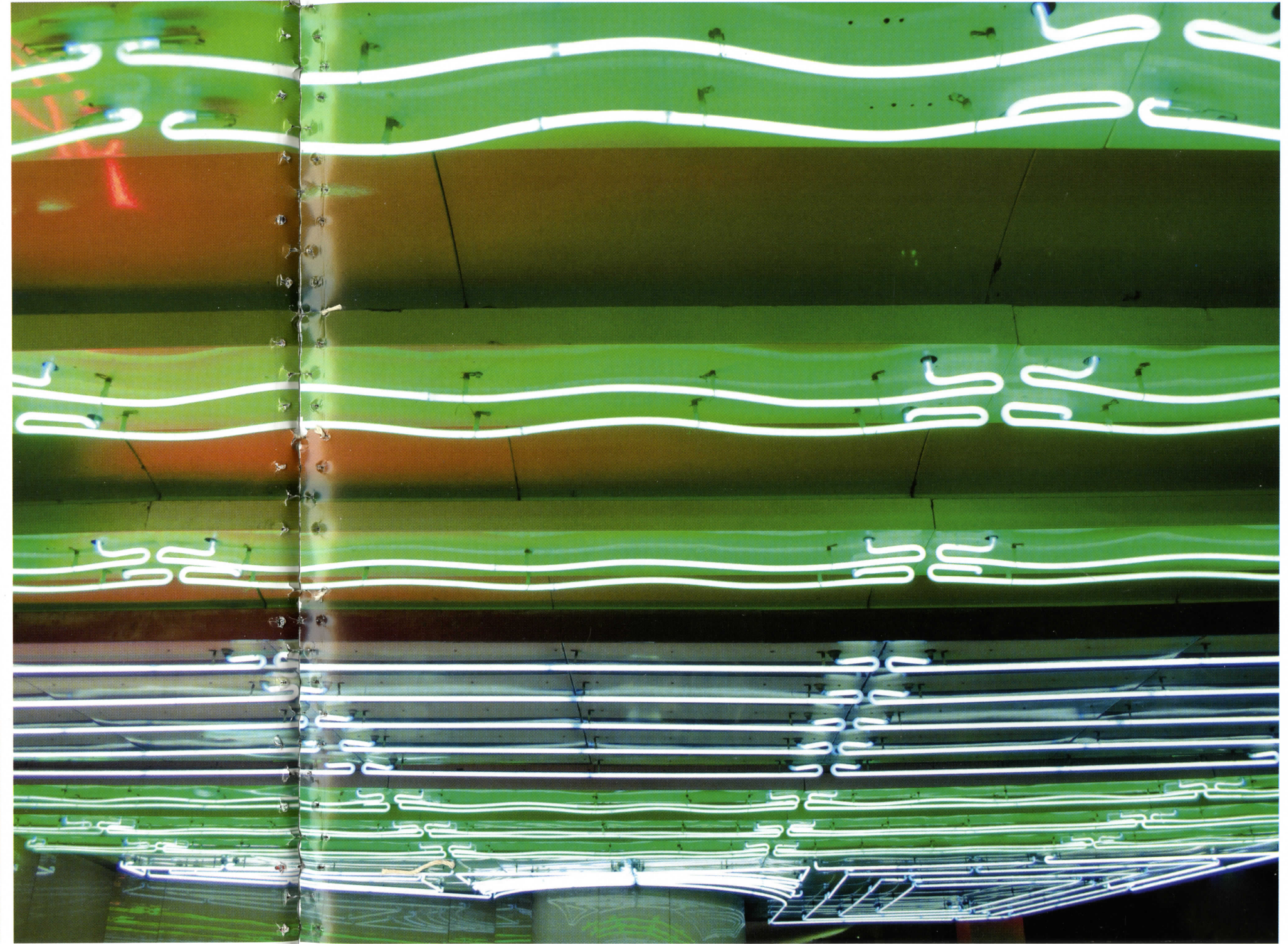
The Burgeoning Cacophony

It started out like gentle hums before a bee sting
peaceful
Grew to the tt-tt-tt-tt-tt of a woodpecker at a tree
Morphed to the brrrrrrrrrrr grate of a chainsaw
It started borrowing sounds an orchestra
was never meant to own
Work threw in the clack-clack-clack-clack-clack
of computer keys
the bring-bring-bring of phoned in needs
the giggles of middle school girls clashing with squeals
the bzz bzz bzz bzz bzz of text message streams
and ding! ding! of assignment reminders
blaring for attention so loud they carve colors
into my eyes
firecrackers
blown synapses
adding crackles and bangs
the heavy sigh of disappointment as depression takes hold
brrrrrrrrrrr, bzz bzz bzz bzz bzz
still building
the din throwing so many colors
life seems fixed
without end or origin
I try to push it to a spot at the base of my neck
and sit

I watch floods of rain assault my window pane
run down gutters
and seep into hushed earth again
to remind myself the world is still moving
she still swallows the sun day by day
still gives the fullness of her girth
to be sucked by ravenous clouds
and willingly drinks it down again
when the sky gives birth to rain
and starlight
crickets still wake in the night
to play symphonies to moonbeams
and the beating of my heart
the heated throbbing in my arm
and the silent blade in my palm
attempt to play time keeper
to this burgeoning cacophony

Kenita Betts
poetry





"Lights" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

"Green Lights" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

Ode to the Insect

They aren't real
they told me.
Hallucinations.
Not enough serotonin,
a chemical imbalance.

But they don't see them,
how they crawl and play upon my peripherals
on my body,
slinking in shadows,
tracing me with their long endoskeletal antenna.

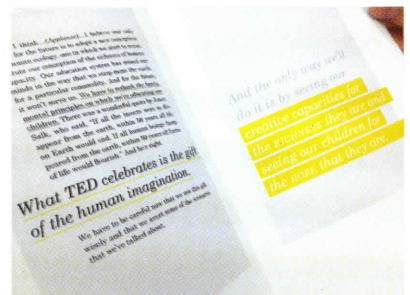
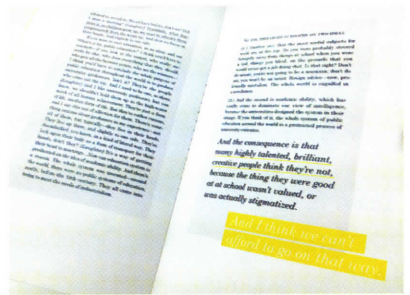
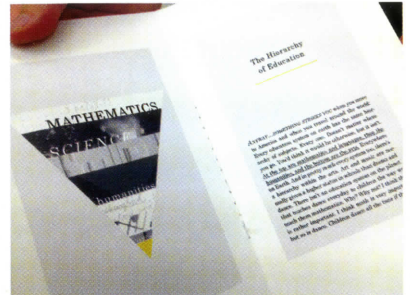
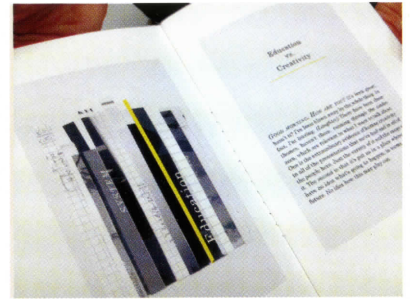
They can't understand,
the need—no, the animalistic fervor—
that lies beneath my skin
to check and recheck,
to scratch, to rid of impurities.

The rhythmic release of red
frees them from their confines,
their parasitic hibernation.
A sweet crimson catharsis
that my hands know all too well.

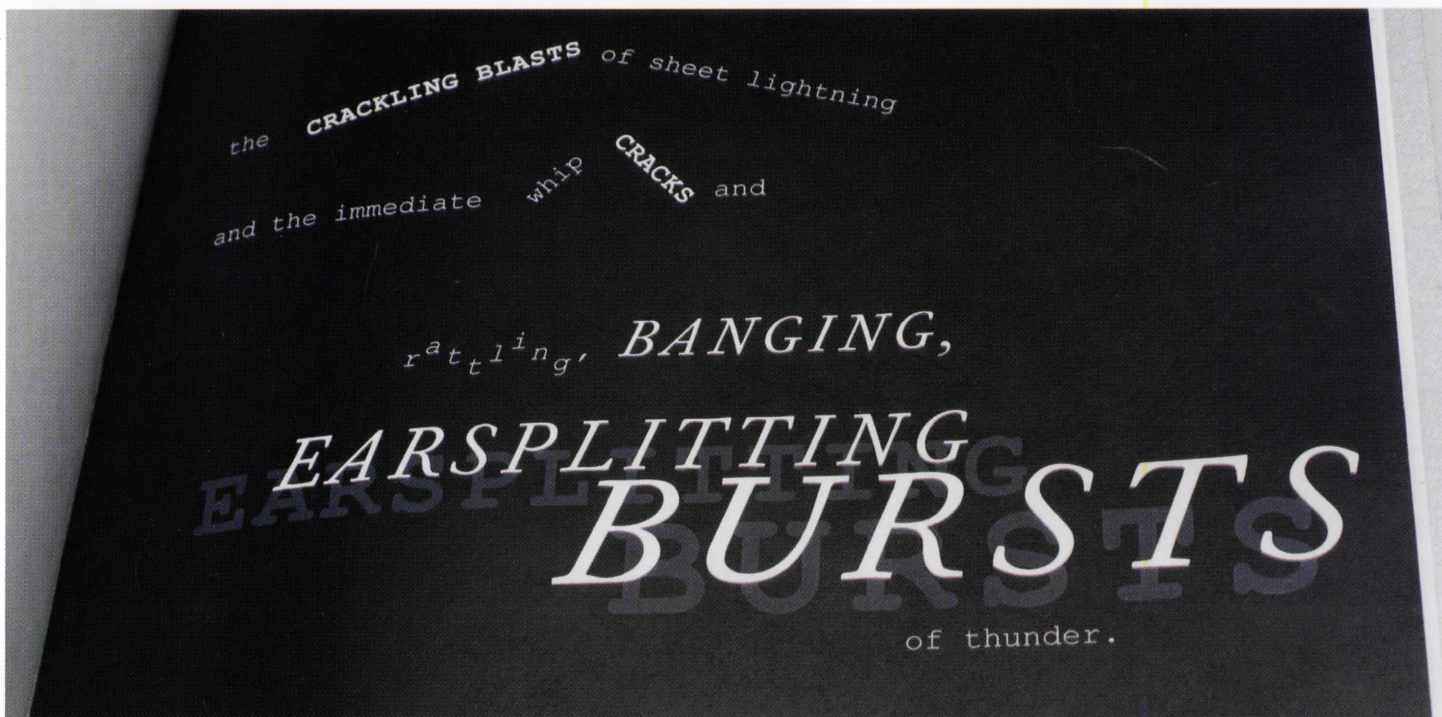
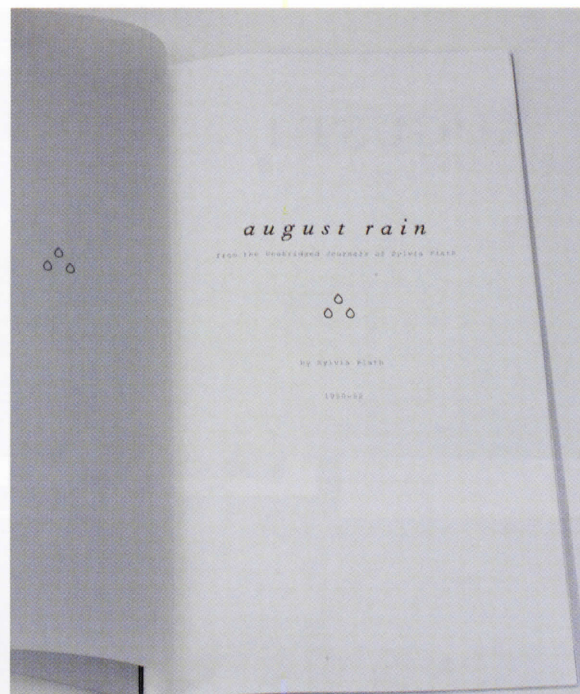
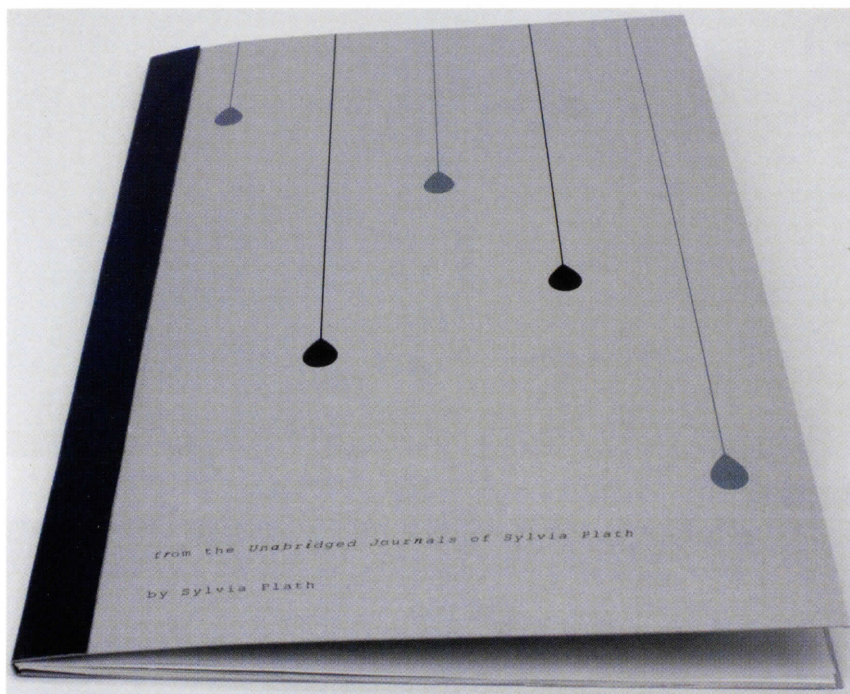
Their secrets are washed from unclean beds,
stripping away the warm, scarlet sheets.

Mariah King
poetry

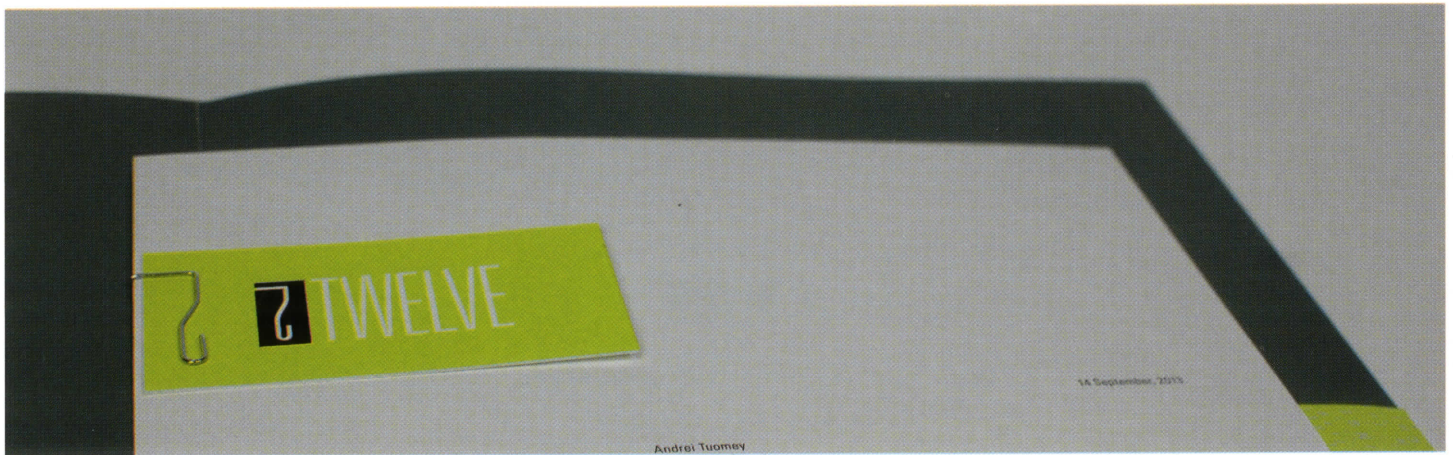
"Orbital" by AJ Hudson
Nikon D5100



"How Schools Kill Creativity" by Heidi Hunter
InDesign CS5, Photoshop CS5, Collage



"August Rain" by Renae Nicole Rodriguez
InDesign CS5 and Adobe Illustrator CS5

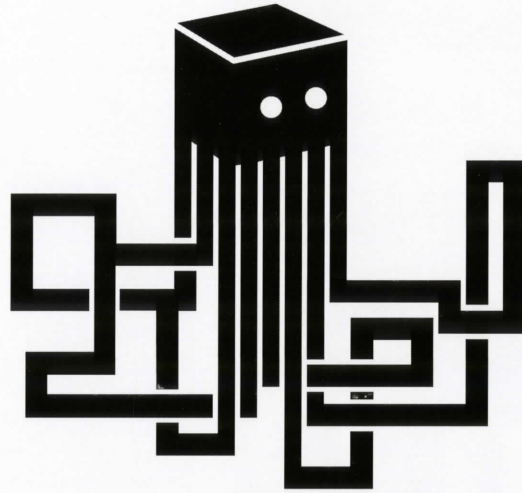


"Two Twelve Identity" by Rachael Baker
Adobe CS6

1



2



3

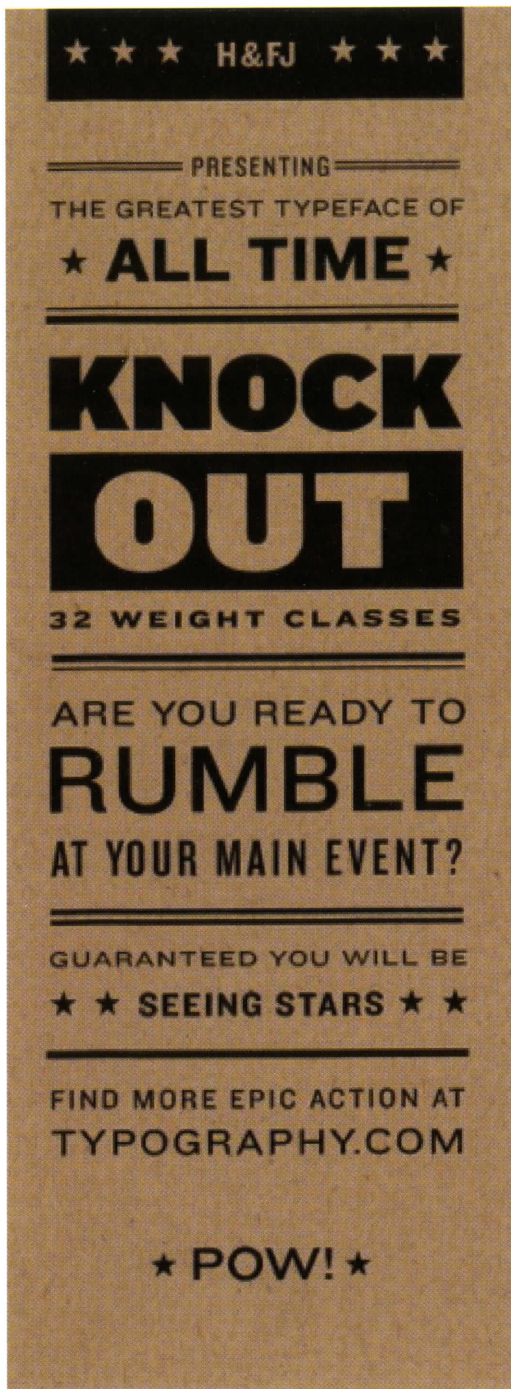


1. "X-Plosion" by Lindsay Rife
Photogram

2. "Octopus" by Lindsay Rife
Vector Logo

3. "Snow Day on Samford" by Emily Brett
Vector Illustration

1

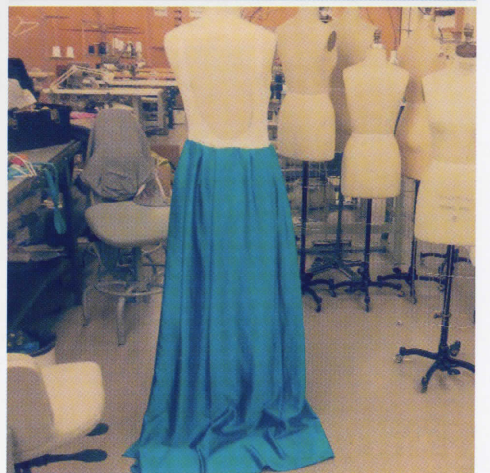


2



1. "Knockout Advertisement" by Emily Brett
Typography

2. "City Harvest: Feed NYC" by Emily Brett
Poster



"Mermaid" by Stephanie Cortner
Hand-made (stitched) dress





"Surrealism" by Heidi Hunter
Vivitar, 100 ISO Black and White Film

Blueberries, in the Summer of '65

To this day, I'll never forget that Mama's palms had always been cracked. They were dried, layered, and peeling and reminded me of the pieces of rock Dale made me hunt for under the dock when he decided he wanted to make the stepping-stone path. It was shallower underneath, and I always liked to watch the smaller fish swim around. When the sun sat lower in the sky and shone down on the water that was shielded by the dock's walkway, they would gather there to get away from the bigger fish that started biting around late afternoon. I liked seeing the way the low sun glinted off their silver-speckled sides. Sometimes after it rained and the water was higher, I'd sit on the bank and ease my feet in, letting the fish nibble on my dirty summer-coated toes. I nearly never wore shoes.

When I went swimming, I'd wear a God-awful red halter bathing suit with a white band at the top. Mama didn't want me wearing two pieces, which, once I hit my teens I always thought was stupid. All my other friends wore two pieces, and their mamas never said a word. Mine said she didn't want me drawing attention to stuff I didn't really have yet, but the junior boys at school thought I had plenty—especially Neal

Morgan Ledbetter
fiction

Boatwright. Still, she told me that as I got older I'd realize that becoming a real woman was nothing more than a nuisance. At 17, I thought I was real enough.

Dale and Mama had been seeing each other for a couple months at that point. I remember liking the way he made me feel—like I was really something special. He talked to me like I was grown up, which is something no one had ever done before even though it was all I had really wanted. Since I was her only, Mama had always just babied me.

I remember when Mama first introduced me to Dale. He smelled like bait, dirt, and Marlboros. He wore plaid shirts with the top three buttons undone so you could see the dark hairs that grew on top of his sun-freckled

collarbone. He always had an untamed look about him and his eyebrow hairs never seemed to go in the right direction—like when you rub a cat the wrong way and its fur looks funny. His eyes were muddy-green, like the lake after it rained. They were still pretty all the same. After I met him and he started coming around more, it made me sad wondering to myself who she would ask to stay the next summer after.

The lake house had been in the family for years. My great-granddaddy bought the plot and built the house himself with the help of his brothers. I never knew any of them, but she said they were all really good handy-men. I figured she had to be telling the truth since the



"Tether" by Beth Pearce
Canon Powershot SD1100 IS

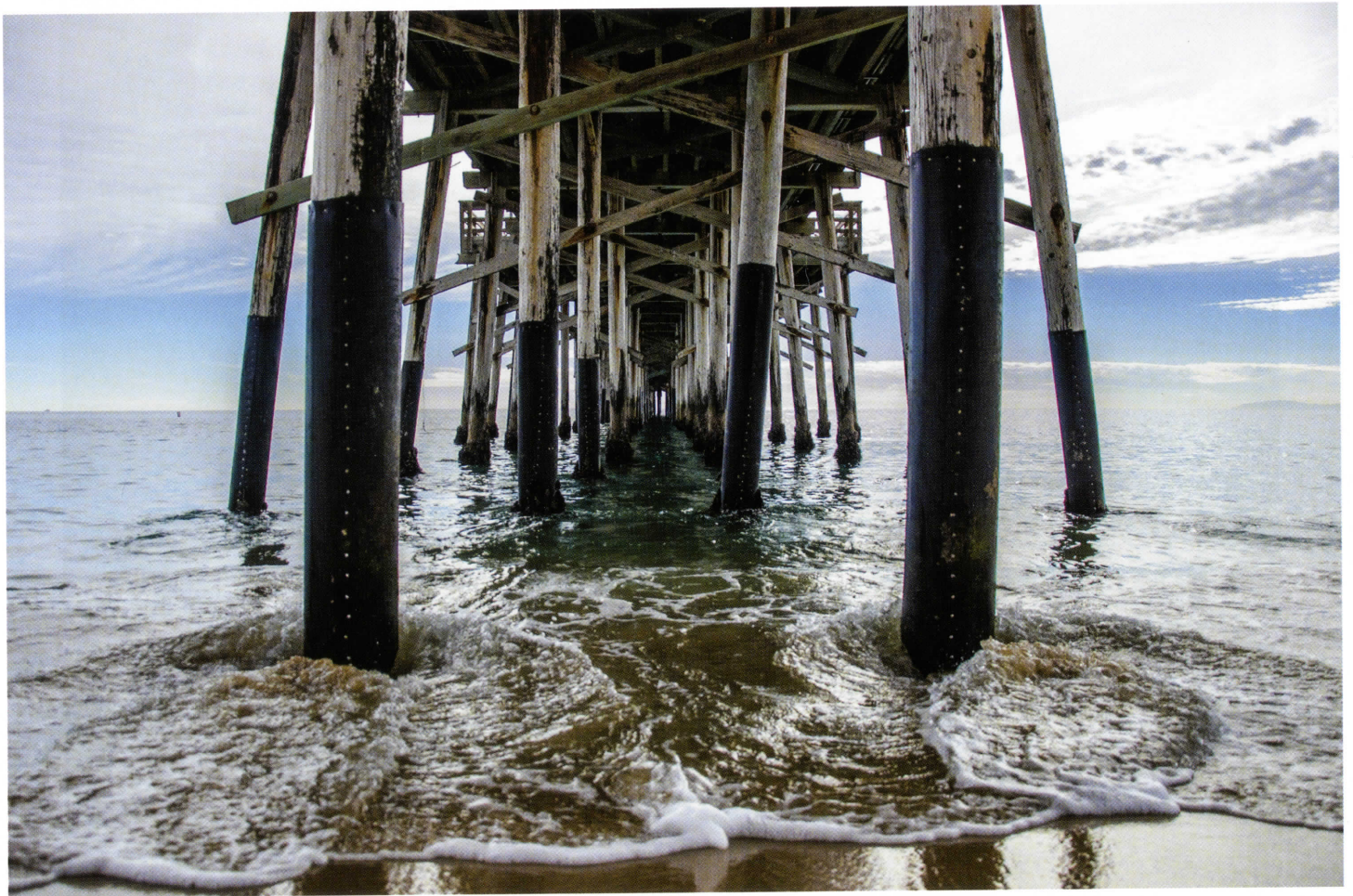
house had stood strong for as long as it had. After he and his brothers finished, they planted two rows of blueberry bushes on the bank just before the entrance to the docks walkway.

"They were your great-granddaddy's favorite and he wanted to leave something extra special behind that the family would always remember him by," Mama once told me. She always made me pick them, since her hands were so dry it made them hurt. I just figured she was lazy, but I wasn't going to complain so long as she continued making her cobbler.

The cabin had two bedrooms; I stayed in one and Mama the other. They were just as simple as the rest of the cabin. We shared a bathroom with tacky salmon-pink tiling. There was a cramped living room area where

we somehow managed to fit a red-and-tan plaid couch, a small table with four wooden chairs, a dark green recliner, a coffee table with an ashtray, and an old TV that sometimes worked. We mostly just listened to the record player that sat on the screened-in porch—gave us a reason to leave the door open. The walls were a dark wood paneling and there was a single lamp that sat beside the couch. It was always on even though there was an overhead light. We never flipped the switch. Mama said she hated it because it hurt her eyes.

The kitchen was small; it had a fridge, a sink, a gas stove and about five feet of counter space total. It was white with black specks. The kitchen still served us well though, even when more family came down to Lake Norman with us. We used to meet up at the cabin with my



"Finality" by Laura Raye May
Nikon D7000

“I would always pick the berries after my hands were pruny from being in the water. I liked the way the berry skins squeaked against my palms. Most of all I liked how sweet they were.”

Uncle Curtis, his wife, and my three other cousins. But the summer I was six, Christie, the youngest, drowned after she dove in too deep and got tangled underwater on a fallen tree branch. After that, they never did come back. I remember then we only saw Uncle Curtis around Christmastime.

At the beginning of that June, Dale had said he wanted to make a new stepping-stone path that extended from our back porch all the way to the bank where the walkway to the dock began. “Joanie, whaddya think about me making y’all a new stepping-stone path down to the dock?” he asked. “I’ll use the mulch that’s already there as the filler between the stones. I got the other stuff I need in my truck already.”

I remember Mama’s cheeks reddened when he asked. “Well we don’t really have the funds for that right now is all.”

“Don’t worry, I got an idea. I’ll do it up for you and Grace real nice.”

The mulch he planned to use for filler was the only thing that had been spread there before, but it was more of a patched mix of scattered mulch and mud. That was the “path” that Dale wanted to improve on. It always pissed Mama off when my feet got dirty from walking up the slope when they were wet from me putting them in the lake. Dale said that the stepping-stones would help with that. He wanted to make it nicer since Mama and I always spent our summers at the lake house. “He really does spoil us,” Mama would always say.

One night after dinner when Dale was outside smoking and Mama was doing the dishes, he asked me, “Grace, you wanna do me a real big favor? It’ll help me and your Mama both.”

“Sure, what is it?”

“I need those flat rocks under the dock for the new stepping-stone path. I’d get ‘em myself but I wouldn’t be as quick, and I know you look a lot better in a bathing suit than I do. Do you smoke?”

“Nope. Not yet, anyway. My boyfriend Neal does sometimes.”

“Listen here, you get those rocks from under the dock and I’ll trade you your first cigarette. You’re a couple years older than I was when I first started.” He took a drag.

“Boys’ll say a woman like you that smokes ain’t a

good one. I’ve never agreed.” He winked and smirked while he exhaled the smoke out of the side of his mouth. I felt like my stomach was fizzling after he called me a woman. Neal didn’t ever let me try his cigarettes—said he didn’t want it to taste like he was kissing an ashtray even though that’s how I always felt after he finished one.

Mama never knew Dale asked me to get the rocks for him. I’d always tell her that I was going to pick some blueberries from the bushes, which I still did afterwards. I would always pick the berries after my hands were pruny from being in the water. I liked the way the berry skins squeaked against my palms. Most of all I liked how sweet they were.

I knew she would have gotten mad on account of the fact that there were definitely copperheads swimming around. I’d always heard that cottonmouths were a problem too as they often liked to hide in the dangling roots of the trees that looked like they were dipping their “toes” in the water. I’d never seen any around that part of North Carolina though. Dale told me once I never needed to worry about snakes under the dock and I listened. He said that the people who thought they’d seen cottonmouths just didn’t know what they were looking for.

He also said he’d always swim under docks as a kid and he’d ended up just fine. I wasn’t ever scared of the snakes though. I liked the way the water was clearer and cooler when it was shallow and sat mostly untouched by the sun. I liked the way the rock was slippery but had enough ridges to support my flat feet. I liked seeing the fish scatter when I got in. Dale covered his tracks by telling Mama he was going to go grab some of the slabs while she made dinner and that he’d fish a while before carrying them up. She would just assume I was swimming while Dale fished.

The first time we decided to put our plan to action it was early evening, a little before six. I knew I was doing something bad and I liked it. I’d never really done anything too bad Mama wouldn’t approve of, except when Neal and I drank beer at the drive-in. I liked being able to make my own choices.

“You sure you’re okay keeping this a secret? I don’t want your Mama getting mad at either of us.”

He sat on the bank in his lawn chair and watched me, waiting for a bite. I remember seeing him spit in the dis-

“His hands smelled like bait and dirt but his hands weren’t as rough as I thought they would be. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up and it reminded me of the way they would do that when Neal touched me.”

tance into the water and it swirling and dawdling.

“Yeah, I don’t mind.” I couldn’t wait.

I slid down the bank in my bathing suit and the water licked at my hip bones when I broke the surface. I felt his eyes following me.

She was cooking dinner, and I heard The Temptations echoing from the player they kept on our stilted screened-in porch that faced the water. Mama and Dale liked The Temptations, but they said it was a guilty pleasure and that I shouldn’t spread that bit of trivia around. I asked them why that was, and they never did give me a direct answer.

I remember I didn’t have to duck too much when I got underneath the walkway to the dock. If I wanted to walk deeper through the water about another ten feet, the bottom of the lake dropped. When I dug up the first rock, it was about the size of a dinner plate—just like he said he wanted. I saw there was another underneath. I wondered how many layers there were and if I’d ever dig up so many I wouldn’t be able to touch the bottom and if it’d be just as deep as it was ten feet away.

“You alright over there?” He spit into the water again.

“Yeah, I’m fine. It’s just harder to get ‘em out than I thought.”

“Well, alright. When you’re done, you’ll get what I promised.”

It was silent for a moment until I heard the record player in the distance.

Well, I guess you’d say, what can make me feel this way? My girl...

After I’d picked up two or three, I started placing them through the wooden bars of the walkway overhead. The sun kept getting lower and I got really cold. I’d grabbed about eight when I decided I was finished. Once I got out I noticed Dale was staring at me real hard.

“You a little cold?” He asked.

I crossed my arms. “Can I try a cigarette now?”

He looked up toward the house. Mama had just turned a light on, and The Temptations continued on playing.

“I reckon we got enough time.” He looked at his watch. “Here, come over to the blueberry bushes.”

I followed him to the bushes and we stopped midway between the two rows that sat on the right. The ones in the second row were taller, so we knew we were safe once the light from the house just barely peeked through.

He pulled out his pack of Marlboros from his front pocket and flipped up the top of the box with his thumb. He was wearing a plaid blue shirt. He leaned to the left to look up toward the house once more. Dale pulled two of them out and handed one to me. I realized my arms had been crossed ever since I’d gotten out of the water. I relaxed and let them hang by my side.

“Alright, now watch this. You’re gonna need to go real slow since you haven’t smoked before. You can’t go coughing or your Mama might hear you and worry.”

I nodded and I felt real giddy.

“Hold it like this,” he put it between his index and middle finger. I did as I was told.

“Put it to your lips and let it dangle ‘fore you light it.”

I puckered my lips and put the edge in my mouth. It was so tense it made the cigarette stand up at an upward angle. My palms were sweating. He paused and the flame hollowed out his deep-set eyes. He laughed and I felt embarrassed.

“You gotta lot to learn.”

He stepped toward me and told me to relax my mouth while he brought his hand to the side of my face and traced my right jawline. His hands smelled like bait and dirt, but his hands weren’t as rough as I thought they would be. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up, and it reminded me of the way they would do that when Neal touched me. But that was only sometimes. I couldn’t really see the details of his face, but I’m pretty sure we were staring at one another.

“Relax,” he repeated again. I watched the cigarette sink down from below the tip of my nose.

“Alright, here we go. Breathe in real easy.”

He took his hand from my chin and pulled the lighter from his back pocket. He held the flame in front of my face for a couple seconds. I felt the heat and I was afraid it’d burn my eyebrows off.

“Grace, you know you’re real pretty like your mom. You definitely got her brown eyes and blonde hair.”

My face got as hot as the end of that first cigarette. I inhaled and began coughing so hard I felt like I was going to throw up everywhere. My eyes and throat burned; my nose ran and it spouted smoke. Dale started patting my back while I knelt down with my hands on my knees, and he tried not to laugh. It made me feel better though.

“You okay?”

“I’m fine, I just feel like a dragon.”

"You are a damn dragon. Here, I'll put both of 'em out and we'll save 'em for tomorrow. You'll get used to this."

His hand stayed on my back and then his fingers traced the edge of my spine. I imagined his large hands and how strong they probably were. A second later we heard Mama yell from the porch that dinner was ready. I was glad she hadn't come out any sooner—if the coughing didn't kill me first she would have. While we walked back up the pathway, Dale stayed beside me and I was glad. Before we went through the screened-in door, he kissed me on the forehead. The heat from his closeness warmed me up.

She had already set the table. The lamp beside the couch was on, and in the middle of the table there was a roasted chicken, mashed potatoes, corn, and green beans. Cobbler was in the oven, keeping warm for dessert. We all took our respective seats at the table. Mama looked at me and then Dale, then back at me again with

an expression I couldn't quite place.

"Sweetheart, why don't you go put some clothes on? You're still in that bathing suit, you must be cold." It was a command more than a question, I knew.

I considered it—for a moment, that is—before I said, "No."

She shot me one of her famous what-the-hell'd-you-say looks. I didn't get those too often. Her left eyebrow was a little cocked. I looked over at Dale and he looked at me and then at my mother, but his mouth was full of corn. There was a lot of everyone looking at one another. It was silent except for the sounds of the record that filtered in through the door from the porch.

"You're barely covered," she snapped.

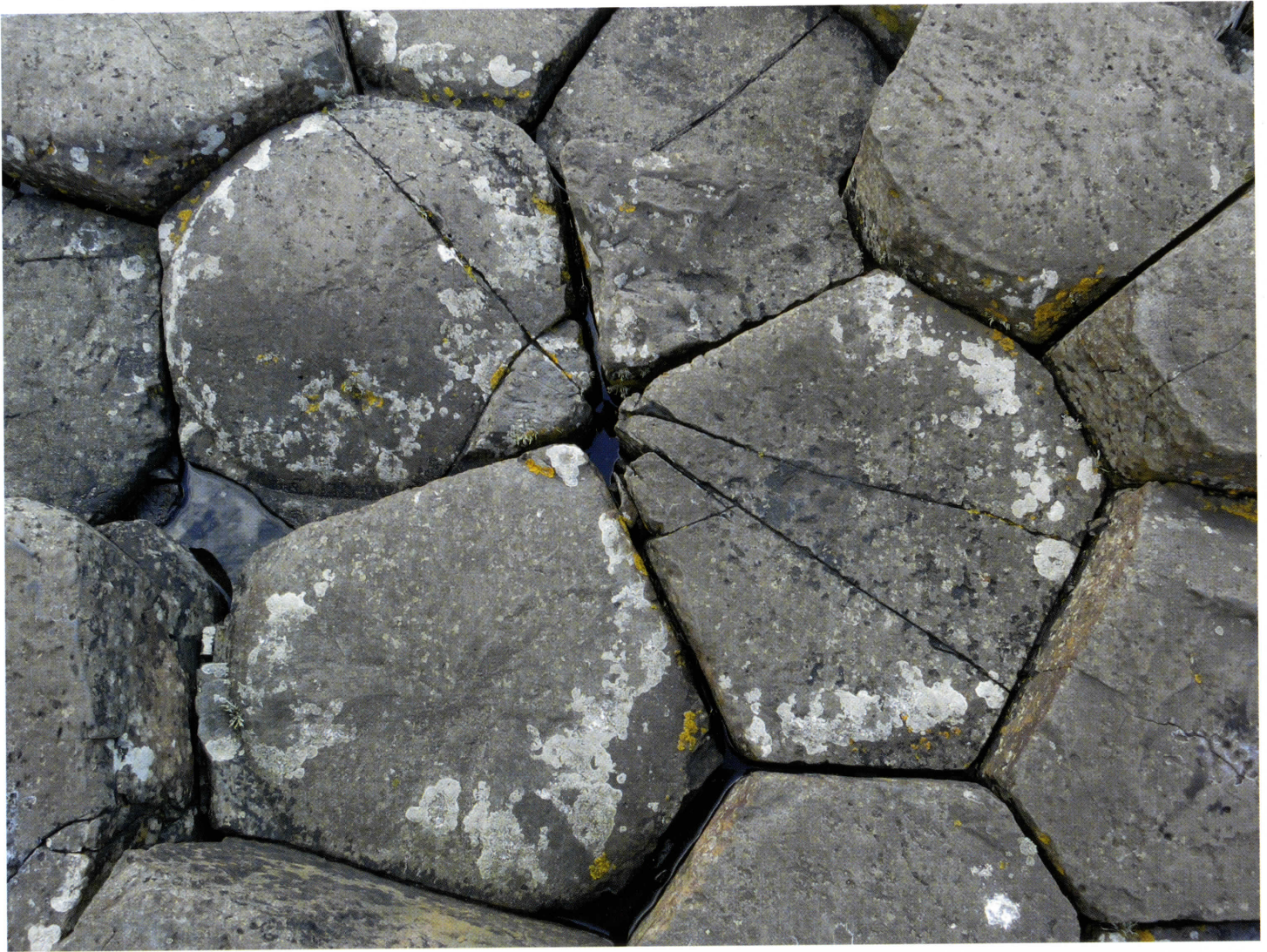
"It's not any different than when we go swimming and come up here for lunch. I don't see the big deal."

Her eyebrow twitched.

"Can you pass me the mashed potatoes, please?" She



"Discarded" by Mariah King
Nikon D5100



grabbed the edge of the bowl and dropped it in front of me just about as quickly as she dropped the subject.

That night when I ate my mashed potatoes, all I could taste was Dale's Marlboro.

After that night our secret routine continued on for the remainder of our stay at the lake house. We couldn't do it every day though—there were only so many blueberries I could pick and as Dale said, I needed to "let the bushes rest." But when we did, I'd collect the rocks, filling our wheelbarrow with them, and he'd watch me while

he fished. During the day while Mama and I sunbathed and swam, he'd work on the stepping-stone path. When he first started, he began at the base of the steps that led up to the porch.

He planned to work his way down toward the dock. He would get his shovel, make up a shallow hole, place the rock in it, and pack the dirt and mulch around it, setting it. It was a simple process, really, but it made all the difference. I remember thinking how good it started to look—how good he looked when he'd unbutton the rest of his shirt after getting too hot. Neal didn't have a lot

“Mama yelled that dinner was ready, so we grabbed the basket and walked up in the same way we had in the nights before, only that time he had his arm around my waist. I didn’t push it away.”

of chest hair. and I knew for a fact his arms didn’t bulge with blood-swollen veins like Dale’s did after he’d been digging for a while. I can’t remember now when I started noticing that. I just remember that I did.

I was watching him one day when Mama interrupted me, “Honey, what *are* you looking at?” She readjusted herself on her towel and slid her sunglasses down to the tip of her nose with her forefinger. I was on my back and turned my head to face her. I kept my sunglasses on.

“I was just seeing how the path was coming along. Dale’s getting a lot done.”

“Mhm, he sure is. You know, I’ll be right back. I bet he could use a drink.” She got up from her towel in her navy blue two-piece bathing suit. She grabbed her sun hat with the red bow on it and placed it on her head after fluffing her hair, which I thought defeated the purpose.

She stepped over me, and I turned my head in the other direction and followed her as she made her way up the still mulch-covered part of the path toward Dale. He didn’t see her coming when she walked up and hugged him from behind. He turned around and grabbed both sides of her waist. Mama stood up on her toes and whispered something in his ear. His hand slid down her back. They walked up to the house together, testing out the new stones he had just put down. They didn’t slip, proving the successful results of his work.

They walked up the porch and disappeared through the doorway to the house. After they disappeared, I rubbed my palms with the tips of my fingers to soothe where I realized my nails had been digging in. They returned a half hour later, her hat gone and her blonde hair tousled.

I was pretty sure she had given Dale more than a glass of lemonade. I turned onto my stomach and napped for the rest of the afternoon.

After a couple more times smoking, I got better at inhaling, though I didn’t much like the aftertaste. Still, I got to the point where I could inhale and exhale without holding the cigarette and just let it hang in my mouth. So Dale and I would multitask—smoking, talking, and picking (but mostly eating) blueberries for Mama.

Over our times together, I learned he was born in Greenville, SC. He never knew who his dad was, just like me. He had three brothers and one sister. He didn’t finish at his senior high school, and he liked shooting squir-

rels off his back porch. He asked me what I was good at studying, and I told him I was pretty good at math.

“Smart women are attractive ‘cause you know they got a good head on their shoulders,” he said.

“Well then, I guess that’d make a lot of sense about me.”

I remember I smiled at him and he cocked his head to the right, like he was thinking real hard about something.

He smirked and showed a gap in his teeth right where the corner of his mouth stopped. His dark hair had looked really nice when it was brushed and he had a slight scruff on him. Mama yelled that dinner was ready, so we grabbed the basket and walked up in the same way we had in the nights before, only this time he had his arm around my waist. I didn’t push it away.

It was a Tuesday evening around 5:45. Mama said she wanted to make a cobbler that night, so I knew I’d be picking up rocks, restocking and eating blueberries, and smoking cigarettes. The stepping-stone path was nearly complete as it descended down from the porch and stopped just a little before it extended by the first row of blueberries. We were sitting out on the porch; Mama was inside.

“You know, after this batch of rocks we probably won’t need no more since it’s near finished. I’d say about maybe another fifteen slabs or so. Then we’ll be done.” He inhaled and exhaled his cigarette. I felt my stomach tighten and my lashes felt wet.

I grabbed the blueberry basket and pushed the porch screen door open; the frame was warped with age, so I always had to give it a small shove.

“Who pissed in your Wheaties?” I heard him yell. I didn’t turn around.

When I got past the blueberry rows, I went toward the bank and slid down to the water. I was under the walkway when I first heard the thudding of heavy feet on mulch, then the clunking of his boots overhead. He paused and then I heard something different: two thumps. He was taking off his shoes.

“I think I’ll join you.” He was standing overhead, voice a little muffled. I heard his feet begin to pad on the wooden planks.

“I think I got it. You only need thirteen more rocks now.” I shifted from up under the walkway and slammed

“ She looked at me and then at him then back at me—
like she didn’t recognize me. And I didn’t recognize her. ”

two more on it through the wooden bars overhead.

He slid down the path anyway and joined me but stayed out from under the dock, digging up the rocks. We didn’t talk for a few minutes. There was a breeze blowing, and I was stepping in a deep crater of soft mud that had formed from removing so many layers.

“Why you acting all mad?” He asked.

“No reason—I’m not mad,” I snapped.

I paused and stood straight. The wet tips of my hair that had dipped into the water felt cold when they stuck to my neck. He made his way toward me, ducking his head as he entered under the walkway, and looked down at me. I looked up at him. His eyes were still the color of churned lake water, and his eyebrows still needed taming. Dale brushed the wet tips from off my neck and hesitated before he placed his left palm on my navel. It nearly covered my whole stomach. His right hand was on my hip. His fingernails were dirty from digging in the lake mud. I was shaking—but not because of the water.

He bent his face down and hovered above mine. I smelled Marlboros, and for a split second I wondered what his facial hair would feel like. Neal’s face was still smooth. Dale’s nose got really close to mine, and I forgot about everything—Mama, Neal, the blueberries, the rocks, and the path. I angled my head to the left and closed my eyes. His mouth brushed my neck. His lips got wetter as they made their way up the right side of my jaw, and his large palm moved lower while my own hands did the same. He pulled me closer, and I felt him; I bit at his shirt.

When I opened my eyes to turn my head, that’s when I saw Mama standing there on the bank next to Dale’s empty chair with a cobbler in her hands. She’d decided to surprise us early by making it from the berries I’d picked a few days before. Her blonde hair framed her blank face before it landed just below her shoulders. Her eyes looked glazed. I gasped, and Dale jerked his head toward the same direction.

He shoved me back and held both hands above his head like he was being held at gun point. It was silent.

“Joanie, I was just—”

“—I just thought I’d see if y’all wanted some cobbler before dinner—thought it’d be a fun surprise. I didn’t see Dale fishing, so I came looking.” She looked at me and then at him then back at me—like she didn’t recognize me. And I didn’t recognize her.

She dropped the baking dish to the ground and made her way up to the cabin. I heard her gagging in the dis-

tance.

He swore, called her name one more time. Dale clumsily splashed through the water after her while I stood there feeling like a deer in headlights. I rubbed my thumbs in circles around my palms. I emerged from under the walkway, the water still irritated by Dale’s exit. I figured it best to stay away from the house.

I picked the blueberries while I listened to them yell, but I couldn’t make anything out. I waited for about an hour. I heard a car door slam and the crunching of an angry car speeding on gravel. When I got back up to the cabin, the lights were off. I heard the smashing of glass from Mama’s room just before I turned the record player off. No music was playing.

When I woke up the next morning, I looked out my window and noticed the missing truck. Dale was gone for good, as I figured he would be. I peeked out the doorway, and all was quiet except for the muffled sound of slamming drawers. I walked across the living room to her room and turned the knob. I let the door glide open before entering.

Her back was to me; she was pulling clothes from her drawers and throwing them over her shoulder on a pile on her bed. When she heard the door open, she paused and didn’t look back.

“We’re going back to Charlotte for the summer. I suggest you get your things. We’re leaving in twenty minutes. So be fast; you’re good at that.” She didn’t turn toward me.

I approached her, and the hardwoods creaked under my weight.

“Mama, I’m real sorry, I—”

I still to this day don’t know what I intended on saying. I would assume the most logical thing would be an actual apology. But I don’t know that if I’d had the chance to say it, I would’ve really meant it.

Mama’s palms had always been cracked, and it sure hurt like hell when one of those palms slapped across my face and unleashed everything she felt for me in that moment. Whatever it was, I knew that’d sting a lot more than a blueberry-bruised cheek.

We drove the hour back in complete silence, neither one of us looking at each other, only at the road. After that day, we never spoke about Dale again—for the rest of the summer we didn’t really speak about anything at all. My friends would ask about him, and I would tell

them it just didn't work out. The rest of the summer I worked. I got a job at Jack's Frosty Freeze, a small ice cream parlor about twenty minutes away from where I lived. On one of my breaks, Neal thought he'd surprise me by bringing me lunch. When he found me outside smoking a cigarette, he said he couldn't date a girl that smoked and he walked away. I remember I didn't cry. I just dropped the butt to the ground and stomped it out.

Mama moved on the summer after that with Rick—the one after that she had Steven, and the one after that the name Ralph rings a bell. I really lost track once I graduated and went off to college. Every time I came to meet up with her in Lake Norman from NC State, she always insisted I bring someone from school—a friend, a

boyfriend, whatever. So long as there was someone else.

After I grew up and made a family of my own, she eventually passed just like the years, but I still go to Lake Norman with my own children. During the summer when I go down to sit on the dock, I walk on the same unfinished stepping-stone pathway that stops just at the rows of blueberry bushes. I always have the same routine—I'll grab a handful of the berries, light up a Marlboro, and sit in a chair that overlooks the water at the time of day when the smaller fish like to gather under the dock. I think back to the summer of '65, to Mama and her men, to a cheek that stung like hellfire, and to the sweetest of tastes. ■



"Light on the Rocks" by Macy Cox
35 mm Vivitar

①



②



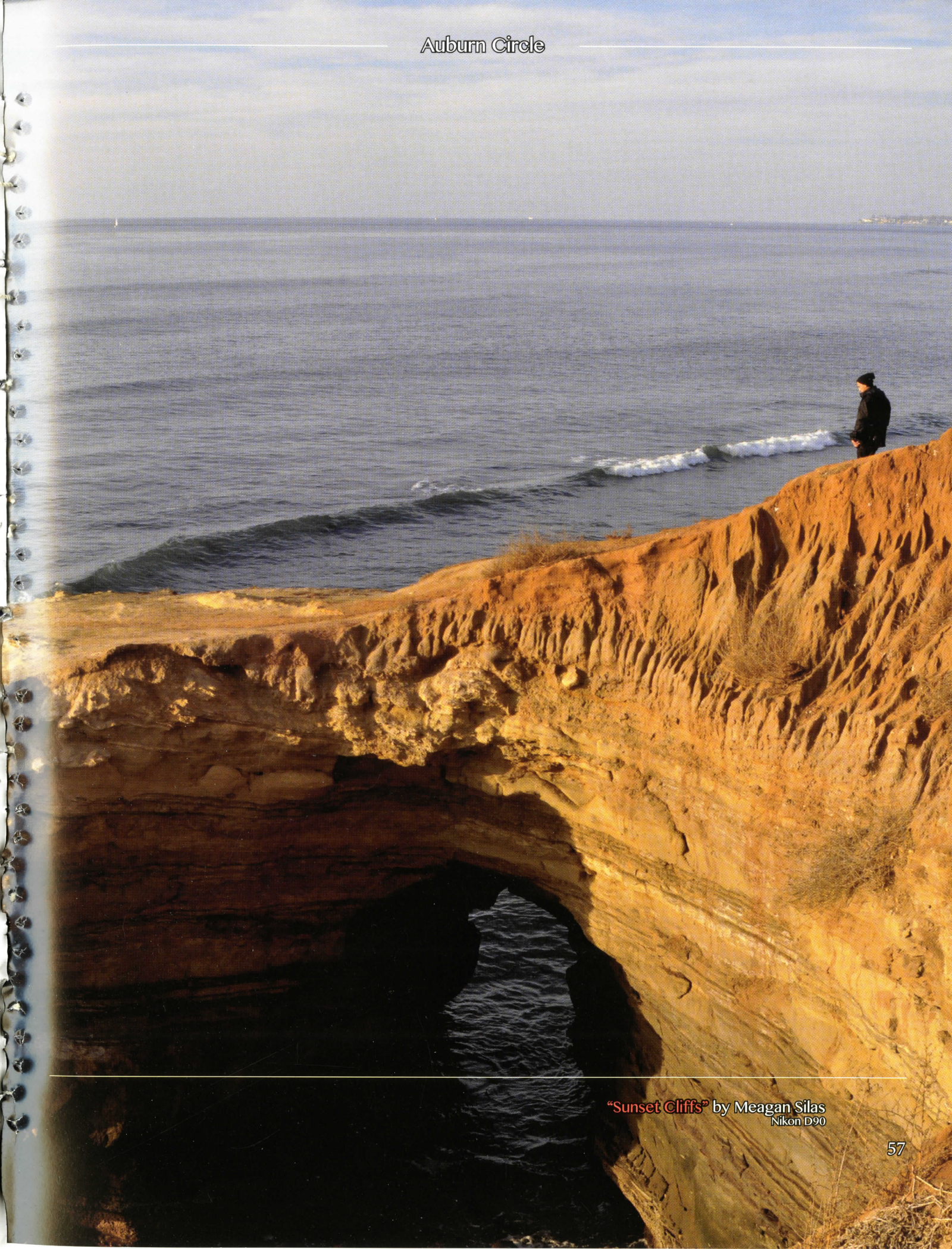
③



1. "Normandy" by Mary Cole Daulton
iPhone 4

2. "Regatta" by Katie Webster
Canon Powershot SX120 IS

3. "Come Sail Away" by Laura Raye May
Nikon D7000



"Sunset Cliffs" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

A Recovery

My toe twists
 into the cool, welcoming marley
 with a there, there
 beneath the hum filling the room
 and curling against my back.
 I arch
 into that loose *allegro*
 that always sweeps me away
 elbows first.
 And it's only when I *piqué pirouette*
 until my eyes feel like feathers
 that I can no longer forget
 you
 used to slide your hand across my shoulder
 down to grace my fingertips
 with strength so I might hold my *arabesque*
 high enough to see you smile
 the way you always did on stage
 and in your kitchen at midnight
 but
 now with every *sauté* I'm pushing
 against a phantom chest
 that falls away with a steady hum
 swarming my heels
 as if to promise
 I can arch away from you.
 And with every humming moment
 I do.

Caroline Barr
 poetry



"Haze" by Mariah King
Nikon D5100

20th century photograph of little girl with bear cub

Church-clean girl in white, washed out,
holding a donut above the baby black
bear, collared and chained to a post.
"Feed him or not," says her mother,
growing smaller where she stands
thinking about her husband's laundry

on the line at home. Buoying laundry,
white shirts riding the wind-swell out
back, dirtied by clouds blushing blacker
than the girl's shadow, still as a wooden post
lying on the fairgrounds. Unmoved by her mother.
The girl wants to watch the bear eat and stand,

see the crumbs cling to fur lips and clawed hands,
but also wants it to beg her, like laundry
begs women. His wet nose thrust out,
that someday-power now held back
by a noose made of circus string and a post:
she will remember this always. Mother

will die in a decade. Girl will become a mother
herself, with a man who sputters inside her, stands,
leaving her dirt on ripped sheets. Laundry
day is tomorrow. Her clothespins out
on the line. Fingernails once clean, now black
from peeling potatoes, scratching at compost.

When the mailman brings the evening post
a warble of clucks erupts from the mother
hens—another tradition that stands
the test of time. The once little girl laundries
the bed linens, wringing the graywater out
and watching it trail away with pupils bled of black.

But for now, there's a donut and a black
bear, gaunt-necked and tied to a post.
Later, the girl will remember, not her mother
but this moment—where she is formidable, standing
pig-tailed, white dress fresh from the laundry,
holding food over a spittling beast, just out

of his reach. She'll remember meeting his black eyes, blank like
dropped laundry, and the roar of circus stands that shook the fence posts
like a mother in a cupboard shaking salt from her eyes.

Rebekah Rielle
poetry

My Cousin's Mindful Photography

I sit at home
staring at the family photo album.

Being weather-worn
to the look of faces
(after a year & three winters
of only hearing her voice
on the phone)
I was broken
by the clock's fragile hammer –
the picture pondered
fluctuates
in contrast to the album.
Was her face skinny,
blurred eyes,
thick brown hair?
Though she wasn't a stick...
or had she gained weight,
awaiting results?

None of these pictures
are accurate.
I throw them away.
Again she shifts in
mind's eyes sunken down,
one moment,
bursting watermelon
the next image,
as she gives birth
to my second, or third cousin.

I complain she should visit
as I see shades slanting,
the photo album is out of date.
In fact, in my mind
it's not a picture at all
but an image of
a female Frankenstein
altering
on my lack of
a photographic memory.

Alicia Renee Berdeguez
poetry

①



②



1. "Mackie" by Mary Cole Daulton
Nikon D5100

2. "Moments Worth Remembering" by Daniel Jackson
Graphite Pencil on Coffee Stained Paper

1



Time Between the Smoke Rings

He slowly exhales and the dancing begins.
Rings at first thick, then disappear thin.
Satisfied with the taste, his lips 'round the stem,
inside, the small fire lights up the bowl's rim.
Ribbon cut freedom is packed there within.
He blows the rings out, and he breathes the smoke in.

Misery greets him the moment he wakes.
He lets out a groan and reluctantly takes
a shower, too cold, before dull, empty work.
His loud, noisy co-workers drive him berserk.
He lets out a sigh as he drives his car home.
To his miserable family, says, "Leave me alone."

Back on the porch, the creaking chair sings.
The winter night air filling up with his rings.
Peaceful night sounds drown out noise that life brings.
Inside is the family and they aren't speaking.
Outside is the man who sits now forgetting
the meaningless time spent between the smoke rings.

Chad Oliver
poetry

2



1. "Orkney Window" by Karen Vincent
Canon S100

2. "Freedom" by Daniel Jackson
Pencil (graphite)

Lost Touch

Once
we were young
and oblivious to the realities
that would shred
everything that we thought would surely last
into a heap:
bloody, pulsating, suffocating, heaving

The last time
I saw you, everything had already
collapsed, and
you were just a wreck of a shell of a mind
not even
there
with us as we poured ourselves out in sorrow

Who could have
guessed how we would talk about these times later
on: about
kairos moments and Tennyson's friend or a
secret kind
of mercy that heals through ephemeral ends

No time then
to think about what was happening to us
We just wretched
our smothered hearts out and piled them on the
mound
The last time
I saw you, we put your sister in the ground

David Sanderlin
poetry

"Kiev Overlook" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

Ode to the pecking order of mares

You tell me you love me
the way two mares touch noses
the first time, that delicate meet before
they bite each others' throats, brand
half moons into braided sinews.

Right before the bucking,
flank breaking dance, the ripple

of gunfire under the pasture grass,
splintering the fence posts.

It's just like this
when you hold me: the promise
of a bruised mare sliding down
on her belly,

the ghost bow of my bridle to the dust.

Rebekah Rielle
poetry

Cueva de los Tarantos in Granada, Spain

She waits at the door
twirling her long brown hair.
The lights are low,
and her silhouette peeks around
the entrance to the small cave-like
bar/restaurant.
I'm sitting in my normal seat
waiting for her to dance.

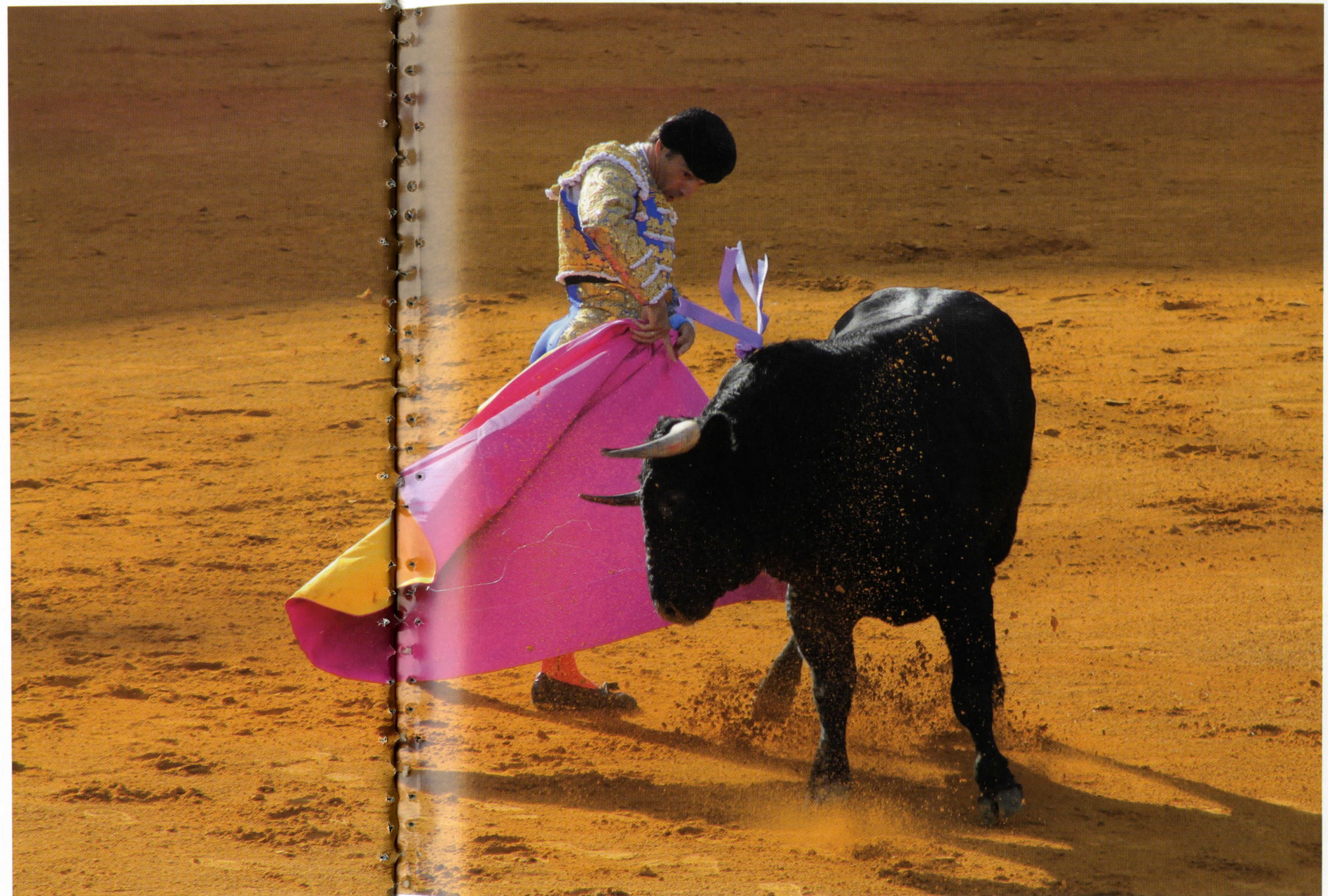
She enters at once—
the long rouge dress, spotted,
accenting her voluptuous bodice,
ruffles of black satin
down the sides
of this goddess of dance.

His voice lures her further
into the cavern, with words
like *venga hermosa*
that caress the guitar and
build tension
in the bongos,
and I grow jealous at his power.
The bongos almost sing too,
through taut animal skin—
as they grow louder
the man's voice moans
with desire.

I am one with the audience
as we draw in slow breaths,
lips on slick beer bottles,
knowing she is close
by the smell of her sweet perfume
and bold flowers in her hair.

I am in love though
she doesn't know me
but how I know her,
this reincarnation of perfect rhythm
in high heels that stomp,
the attitude pulsing
through her stained red lips,
a confidence radiating from her
clapping hands, bold glare,
and twisting hips,
this Flamenco Dancer,
this image of our lust.

Alicia Renee Berdeguez
poetry



"Plaza de Toros" by Michelle Roberts
Canon EOS Rebel T3

Honestly

Right after cancer, let's cure
feelings, carve out the spread
of you. I want nothing,
the void.

Give me the nil-encompassing
black. I want to look in your
blank face and see reflected
back my own blankness—
another face, another sign
by the road.

I don't want the pull of habit,
the sizzle of magnets as they
snap together, as I need,
you. Honestly,

I want to smack you in the face
and spit. I want to hawk those stupid words
"I wish I knew how to quit you" and watch them drip
and I don't want to mean them.
Because I never meant them.
Because there's nothing to quit.

Richard Tyler
poetry



"Unplugged" by AJ Hudson
Nikon D5100

Pinching the Mayflower

In England pinching means stealing, and yes, I did pinch the Mayflower, or rather a piece of it. I had heard that the famous ship that brought the pilgrims to America had been sold for scrap in London hundreds of years ago and sent up the Thames River to the little English village of Jordans in Buckinghamshire to enjoy its new incarnation as a barn.

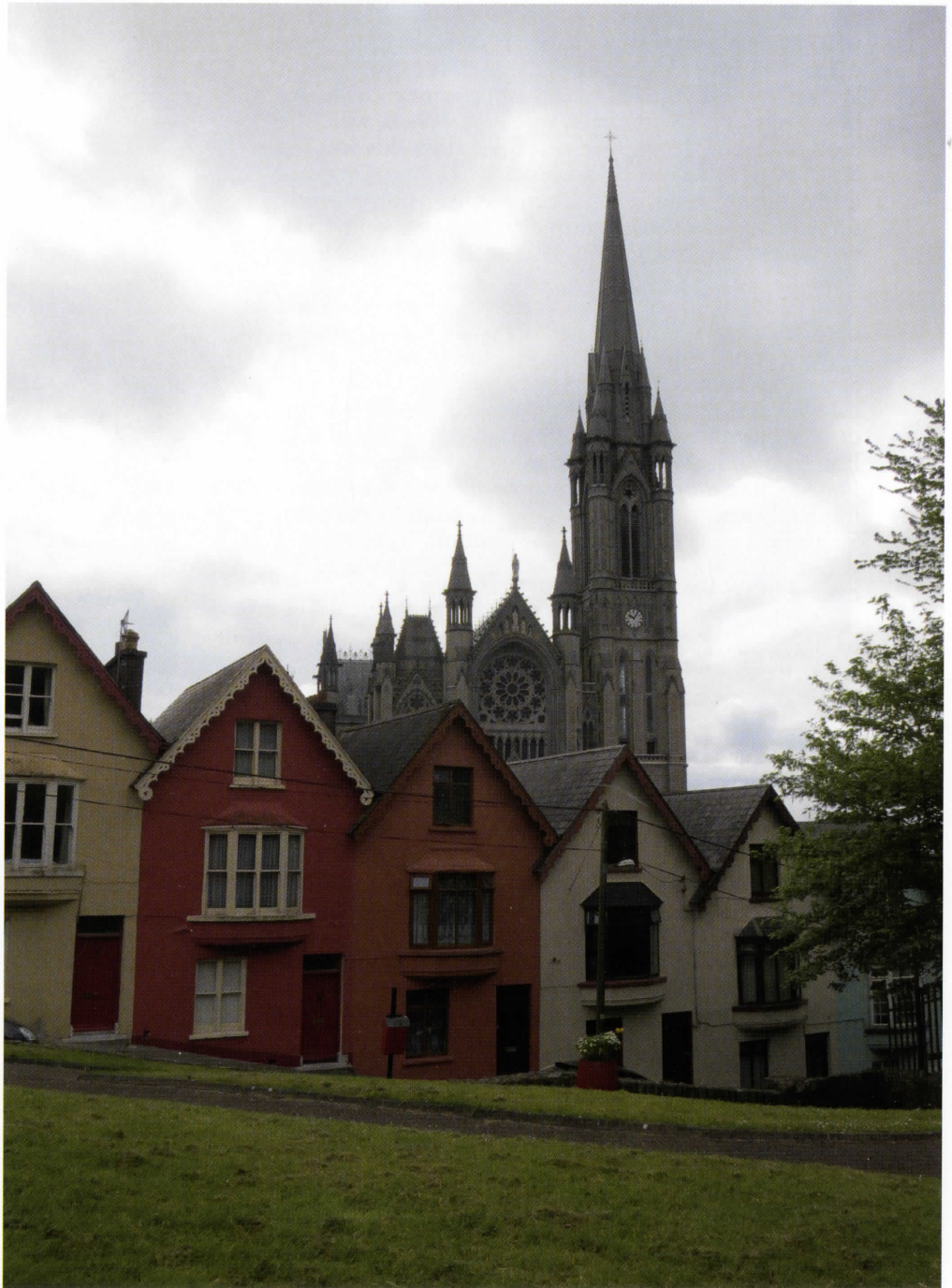
Being a British transplant to the United States, I found the thought of England having possession of one of the most historical items, and such a major source of pride to Americans, intriguing. It brought out the Britt in me. "They may have won the revolutionary war, but we got the Mayflower," I thought smugly. Of course, I had to see it for "bragging rights" when I returned to the States. I could proudly announce to all my American friends that "I saw your Mayflower." I knew there would be shock, amazement, and disbelief. Most Americans don't even know that their precious Mayflower still exists, let alone that it has morphed into a barn. I love to tease and torment Americans. It's great fun.

So my best friend, Sharon, her new husband, and I set out from London early

Judy Heenan
nonfiction

one morning to drive the thirty or so miles to Jordans to see this famous American icon. Sharon, an American and dyed-in-the-wool proud southerner, had the great fortune and sensibility to marry a Britt. As far as I was concerned, it was the only thing she'd ever done right in her life, and I was pleased with her choice. After a twenty-year friendship, it also meant that I was rubbing off on her. Not to mention that it also meant a free place to stay in London, with her new husband as a built-in chauffeur, tour guide, and translator for my visits. I was ecstatic.

Jordans was easy to find on the map, and as we drove into the quaint little village, I wondered where all the signs and markers were directing us to the Mayflower. When we asked directions, we were told that we had passed it about a mile back. "Oh no!" I thought. We had passed some large ugly barns on the way into Jordans and one of the largest and ugliest had been about a mile back. We laughed as we had passed it chuckling, "What if that's it?" Very funny. "That can't be it," I said with typical American overconfidence. We headed back and sure enough that was it. It loomed large, dark and foreboding on the side of the road in a cow pasture. "That can't be it," I insisted, sticking to my acquired sense of overconfidence instilled in me from years of being surrounded by Americans. Where are all the signs, the gift shop, the restaurant, and most importantly the bathrooms? I had to pee. There wasn't even a parking lot. This can't be right. It did



"Deck of Cards" by Karen Vincent
Canon S100

not make any sense to the American version of myself. I was having a hard time accepting it. This was just a run-down old barn sitting alone in the middle of nowhere. It looked like the ship had been turned upside down and had a big barn door cut on one side. Where were the big neon signs letting everyone know that this was the Mayflower? There were, however, a big "No Trespassing" sign and warnings of security cameras. Apparently some Americans had already been here, and appropriate precautions had been taken. This mission would require stealth.

I yelled to Sharon's husband from the back seat, "Pull over! Pull over!" He was going to pass it by again and I wasn't about to let that happen. I threw my camera to Sharon and jumped out of the car yelling, "Get my picture, quick!" I ran over and positioned myself strategically beside the one and only tiny sign saying "Mayflower Barn" stuck haphazardly on the barn near ground level. I had to have proof of my whereabouts for my disbelieving American friends back home. As I ran to the barn, Sharon got out of the car in slow motion. "Come on!" I yelled. Southerners! Our getaway driver was turning the car around ready for a quick escape.

As Sharon held the camera to take my picture, I folded my hands behind my back. It's slimming. The camera adds 10 pounds but standing at an angle with hands behind your back removes them. Suddenly, I felt a plank of wood behind me loosen. I grabbed it and pulled. A chunk came off in my hands. Uh oh. Sharon was still trying to figure out my camera and didn't notice what was going on. Southerners! "Take the picture!" I yelled. The getaway car had turned around ready to go, and Sharon's husband was yelling for us to hurry up. As soon as she took the picture I raced over to her, grabbing her arm and pulling her towards the car. I gleefully held up my chunk of the Mayflower as we got to the car and said, "Look what I got!" The car was already inching forward as I jumped in the back seat yelling, "Go, go!" But we weren't going anywhere. Sharon had come to a dead stop and was standing there motionless. When you commit a crime on foreign soil it is of vital importance to be acutely aware of the "hurry up" factor during the escape phase. After you cross the border and return to home turf, then you can count your ill-gotten gains and thumb your nose at the authorities who can't lay a hand on you. Sharon obviously didn't understand this. Southerners!

"Ah wanna a piece of the Mayflowa too," she drawled. "Get in the car!" I yelled. By this time her husband was yelling at her too. He and I were both panicking in true



"Apollo" by AJ Hudson
Nikon D5100

British style. "Get in the damn car," I repeated slowly between clenched teeth. We were so close to home free. Sharon just stood there. Southerners are stubborn too. I knew her well enough to know that arguing with her was futile. Pleading doesn't work. Getting mad doesn't work. Giving in works.

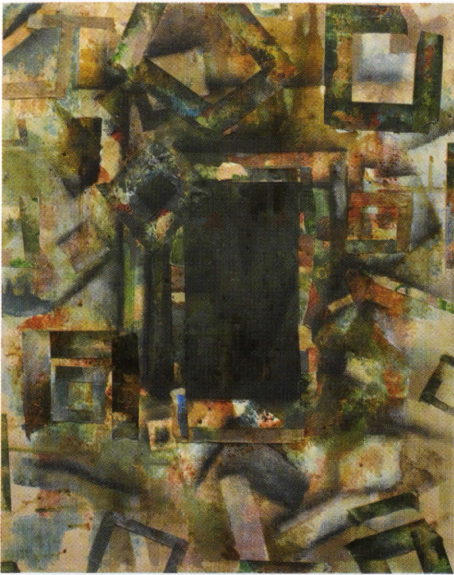
I silently got out of the car and as I walked back to the barn I snatched the camera out of her hands. She won. She smiled sweetly as she took her place in the same spot I had stood; right beside the big gaping hole I had ripped

in the side of the Mayflower. I took her picture. My partner in crime ended up pulling off an even bigger chunk than mine. I was pissed. The last thing I wanted to do was sit in a foreign jail because of something Sharon had done. It was okay if I caused my own incarceration, but I wasn't going to have someone else cause my downfall—even my best friend. Then I remembered a saying I heard a long time ago, "A good friend will come and bail you out of jail, but your best friend is the one sitting beside you in jail saying, "Damn, that was fun." Southerners! ■



"Wee Highlands Calf" by Karen Vincent
Canon S100

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1. "Fall Rectangles" by Daniel Jackson
Acrylic Paint

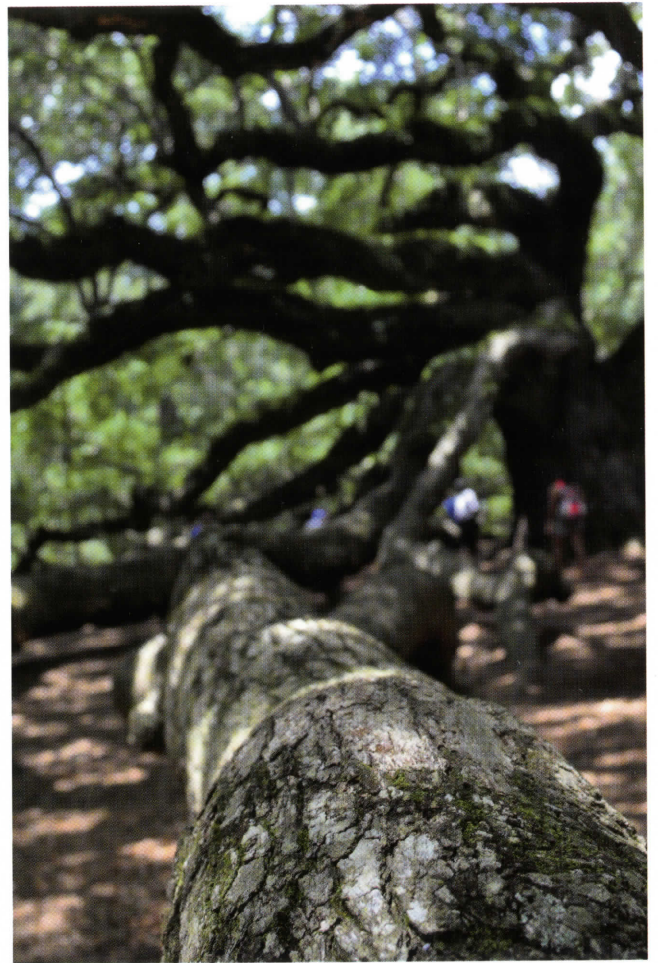
2. "Barn Cat" by Katie Webster
Canon T3

3. "Woods" by Conner Dungan
Canon EOS Rebel T3

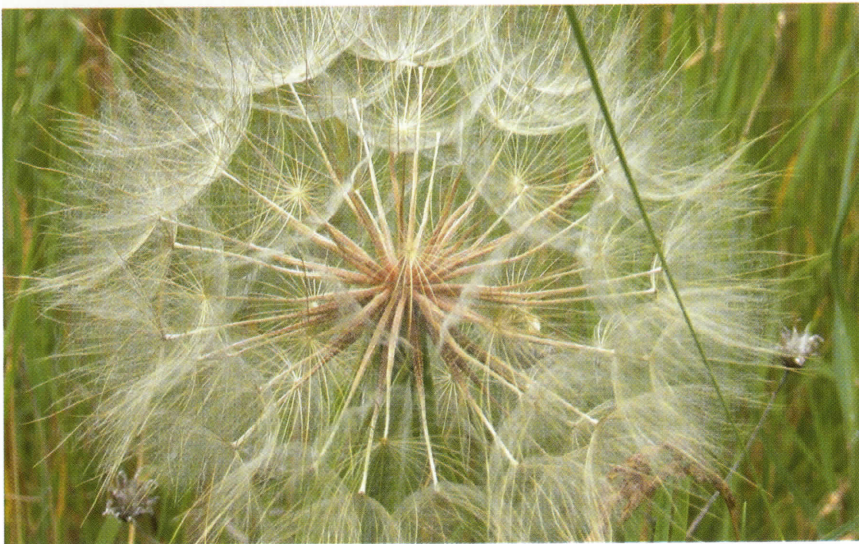
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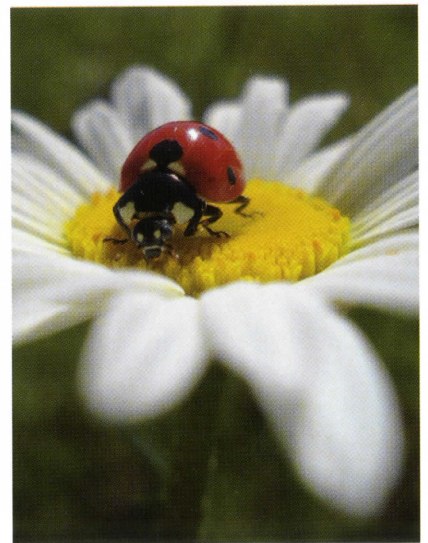
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1. "Angel Tree" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

3. "First Curve" by Ross Peterson
Olympus Camera

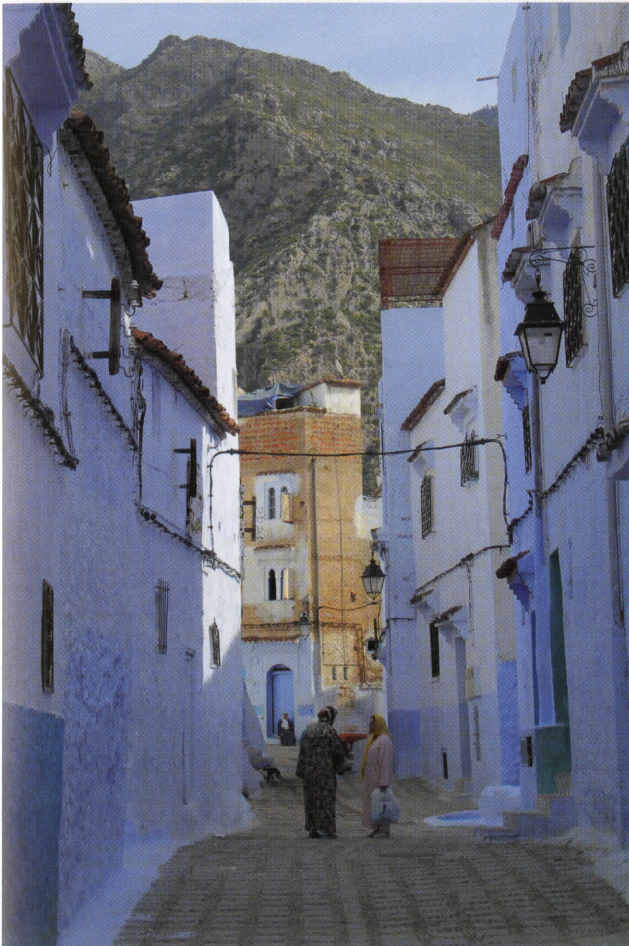
2. "Aged" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

4. "Vibrance in Springtime" by Katie Webster
Sony DSC-W55

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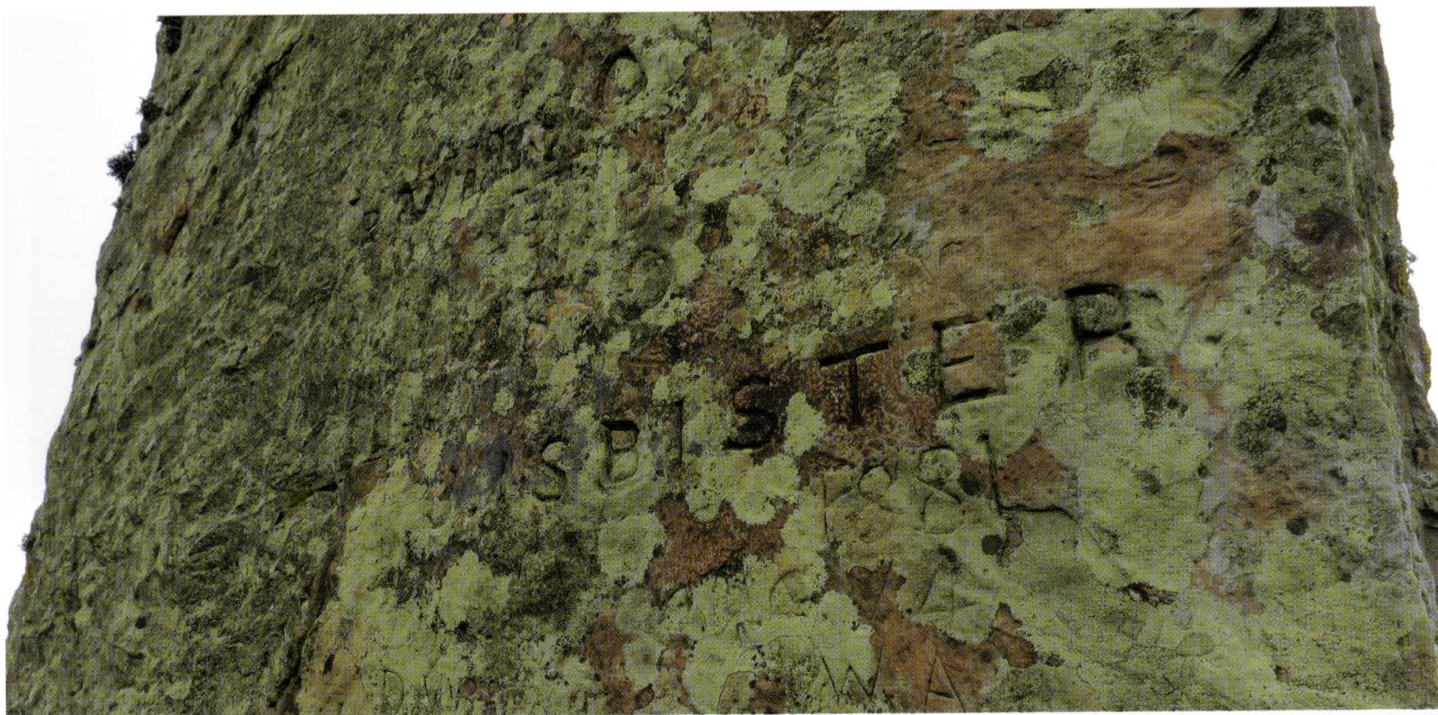


1. "Dauphin Island" by Laura Kennedy
Nikon D90

2. "Chefchaouen" by Michelle Roberts
Canon EOS Rebel T3

3. "Castle Views" by Karen Vincent
Canon S100

1



2



1. "Ancient Stone, Modern Graffiti" by Karen Vincent
Canon S100

2. "Colorado Dog Park" by Katie Webster
Canon T3



1



2

1. "Lift" by Laura Kennedy
Superheadz Wide Angle (Film Camera)

2. "Yellowstone" by Laura Kennedy
Pentax K1000 (Film Camera)

The Downfall

The elder mountain towers above
His kingdom, clad in emerald robes,
White crown against blue skies
Where feathered bards harp and sing.

His garb grows faded and stained—rusty
Blotches against abiding evergreen.
Countless holes emerge in the thinning
Cloth, threadbare after seasons of wear.

A bleak forgotten stranger rides toward
The king, gliding on the wind, and offers
Him a pallid cloak to clothe his trembling
Frame. The king slouches under the weight.

An icy dagger glints out of graying robes
And strikes the old king's shivering chest
And plunges deep. The sound of thunder, then
Silence. The stranger solemnly lingers.

Pines wilt grimly under the crunching
Burden, then finally surrender
As the chill departs. The king's tears thaw
Into hesitant drips, then trickle pure.

They stream down the mountain's solemn face,
Melting away the shroud of death.
The pines' needles rethread the king's raiment.
He lifts his crown and the music begins anew.

Chris Sanchez
poetry

"Hot Springs" by Laura Kennedy
Pentax K1000

January 1st

Here was the new year with its lips on the bedroom window,
breathing puffs of blindness that bloomed and decayed
like the smell of a woman wearing a man's cologne.

It waited for us to press our own rough lips to the pane,
try to taste its gray. But we
were not ready.

With lidded eyes and waterlogged tongues,
we flung ourselves together, untangling
by twisting. Sheets bought crisp
and white in another life,
stage of Act IV: Our Denial.

Gray is the color of the city, but not of sadness.
We think this when we're done.

Yes, this year will be sad—but there will also be
cedar wood shavings, yellow dolloped feverfew,
new lines on your face for me to love.

Because time, dear, is not like us.
It keeps its promises.

Rebekah Rielle
poetry

"Reflection" by Conner Dungan
Canon EOS Rebel T3

Epilogue

Drink this, boy. It'll put hair on your chest.

After, they string him up, head down,
a mis-hung piñata to be emptied, watching
as all his Disney magic flows
down the drain. Only a pile of steak,
jerky, and another fourteen points for the wall.

Eat this, boy. It'll put hair on your chest.

Before, there will be no pomp or circumstance
of the Indians; all ritual unobserved—
just the inherited to-hell-with-it-all toss
of the boy into the waves, and the wait
for instinct to kick in.

Kill this, boy. It'll put hair on your chest.

After, they remove everything bad,
scrape the walls, scrub clean the graffiti—
leave only what they can use.
They make sure he is completely hollow,
so they can fill him up again.

Richard Tyler
poetry

"Prayer Hike" by John Núñez
Canon 13

Sonoran

I can see the desert.
Wizened land and ancient mountains,
Shining eye in boundless sky,
Thousand lights in darkened nights.

Prickly arms of green
Yearn for embrace,
Standing in lonely multitudes
Over crumbling lands.

Rivers dried to wasted washes.
Shriveled shrubs disguise
That shaking coil of mortality
Lurking among the rocks.

Spirits bound in superstition
Stand above the golden canyon,
Unmoving, undying,
Watching lights across the valley.

As the sun tumbles over the horizon,
A sunburnt moon crowned
In a halo of ice ascends,
Glowing in cloudless heavens.

Fruit bats flutter, clumsy,
Toward tasty flowers, heedless of
Clamorous coyotes hunting frenzied—
A hundred eyes gloating.

Veins of white blaze across black skies
Like striking serpents upon the parched lands.
Bitter soot of the rush of dust
Throttling tears.

Skies now choked by dirt and smog.
Doves coo in gritty mourning
For soothing rains that never come.
I can see the desert.

Chris Sanchez
poetry

"Canyon Stroll" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

How to Submit to the Auburn Circle

At the beginning of each semester, the *Auburn Circle* takes submissions for that semester's publication. Submissions include art, interior design, graphic design, poetry, photography, fiction, non-fiction, fashion, architecture, and any other documentable literary or art form.

In order to submit a work, interested artists should fill out a waiver. Waivers are available from our office in the Student Publications Suite or downloadable from www.auburn.edu/circle. Each submission must include a waiver.

Please visit our website www.auburn.edu/circle or email auburncircle@hotmail.com for more information.

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facebook.com/theauburncircle
twitter.com/AuburnCircle

"Pathway in Kiev" by Meagan Silas
Nikon D90

“Creativity is allowing yourself
to make mistakes. Art is knowing
which ones to keep.”

- Scott Adams